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ABSTRACT

Prepared by the National Middle School Association (NMSA) and approved by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), this handbook presents curriculum guidelines and worksheets for undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs focusing on grades 5 through 9. Specifically, the guidelines are designed to assist in the preparation of curriculum folios as part of the accreditation process and to aid in the development or revision of middle-level programs. Following introductory materials, the first part of the handbook provides requirements for middle-level teacher training programs at four levels: a basic teacher education program, a master's degree program, a specialist's degree program, and a doctoral program. For each program, minimum standards and appropriate accreditation documentation are described for the following program components: (1) in-depth study of the developmental stage of early adolescence; (2) knowledge of middle-level philosophy, curriculum, and instruction; (3) content knowledge in at least one broad teaching field; and (4) field experience at the middle level. The second part of the handbook provides four sets of matrices for use in reporting compliance with NMSA guidelines for the basic through doctoral program levels. Matrices include a list of the minimum requirements described in the handbook and space to cite courses or experiences that fulfil the requirement. (AC)

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The following three publications which help clarify the position of National Middle School Association on teacher preparation and certification may also be purchased:

Professional Certification and Preparation for the Middle Level: A Position Paper of National Middle School Association

Preparing to Teach at the Middle Level,
William Alexander and C. Kenneth McEwin

On Site: Preparing Middle Level Teachers Through Field Experiences,
Deborah A. Butler, Mary A. Davies, Thomas S. Dickinson

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Foreword

Jeanette Phillips
President, NMSA

National Middle School Association is pleased to publish this first issue of *National Middle School Association Curriculum Guidelines* as approved by NCATE. It contains undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation curriculum guidelines which were written by members of the Professional Preparation and Certification Committee of National Middle School Association and approved by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. These curriculum guidelines focus directly and exclusively on specialized middle level teacher preparation programs.

This book is designed primarily to assist those preparing curriculum folios as part of the NCATE accrediation process. It may also prove useful, however, at institutions where new programs are being designed or existing ones being revised and strengthened.

An underlying purpose of NMSA's involvement in teacher preparation issues is the desire to enhance the instructional effectiveness of middle level teachers. This, in turn, directly benefits young adolescents. Historically, few professional preparation programs have been available to provide prospective and inservice middle level teachers with the specialized knowledge and skills needed to be highly successful. It is hoped that the curriculum guidelines and other information included in this publication will serve as a stimulus for needed change and as a resource for those responsible for the preparation of middle level teachers.

I look forward to the time when all teachers who come to our middle level schools will do so with the wealth of specialized knowledge and skills needed for teaching young adolescents. The curriculum standards presented here should help this dream become a reality.

Introduction

National Middle School Association has long recognized the importance of the special preparation and accompanying certification of middle level teachers. This recognition has been evident to middle level authorities for at least 50 years. The continuous staffing of middle grades classrooms by teachers interested in and prepared to teach other age groups has been a long-standing problem in middle level education. Historically, teacher preparation institutions, state departments of education, and the profession itself have failed to provide specially-designed programs to prepare teachers and other professionals for careers in middle level education. Since the founding of the junior high school movement at the beginning of this century, middle level schools have been staffed primarily by those whose training and interest lie at other levels. The large majority of today's middle level teachers were trained by departments of secondary education with heavy emphasis on subject area content or by departments of elementary education with heavy emphasis on teaching young children.

Teacher preparation institutions have been reluctant to establish middle level programs and certification agencies have permitted teachers with a great variety of preparations to teach in the middle grades. This situation has created, or at least perpetuated, one of the most serious problems in middle level education—that of making middle level schools miniature versions of senior high schools or upward extensions of elementary schools. This problem continues despite overwhelming evidence that neither model is valid. Although limited progress is now being made in the establishment of special preparation programs and certification plans, much remains to be accomplished.

The problem of a lack of specialized middle level teacher preparation programs at the undergraduate level has been compounded by the fact that colleges and universities have not met the challenge of establishing such programs at the graduate level. Those who choose a middle level teaching career often find it difficult, indeed at times impossible, to find graduate programs which focus on teaching young adolescents.

Specialized middle level preparation is also needed beyond the masters and specialists levels. As middle level education grows in stature and prominence in American education, the need for teachers who are educational leaders in areas such as curriculum development, faculty development, and teacher preparation becomes even more crucial. Advanced degree programs will assure that teachers who are striving toward leadership positions in middle level education will have rich opportunities to enhance their knowledge of the field.

National Middle School Association has taken an active role in seeking to improve this situation and, therefore, the educational opportunities of young

adolescents. The following briefly outlines some of the steps taken by the Association.

In 1985 the NMSA Board of Directors adopted a position statement on middle level teacher preparation and certification titled *Professional Certification and Preparation for the Middle Level: A Position Paper of National Middle School Association.* This document clearly states strong support for specialized professional preparation and certification of middle level teachers. Essential elements of middle level teacher preparation and the essential role of specialized middle level teacher certification are emphasized.

A monograph, *Preparing to Teach at the Middle Level,* has been published by NMSA. It encourages the development of specialized teacher preparation programs and points out the important role middle level certification plays in initiating and maintaining such programs. Results of a national study of the status of middle level teacher preparation and certification are presented and illustrative model teacher preparation programs are described.

The Association, in continuing to support middle level teacher education, has published *On Site: Preparing Middle Level Teachers Through Field Experiences.* This monograph deals with the critical field experience component of teacher education and offers numerous examples of collaborative models for both pre- and student teaching field experiences.

National Middle School Association is sensitive to multicultural and minority issues in education and supports the standards, procedures, and policies regarding these issues as outlined by National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. *National Middle School Association Curriculum Guidelines* have been developed within the spirit of all NCATE policies.

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Curriculum Guidelines

Handbook

Basic Teacher Education

An identifiable teacher education program should be established for the preparation of middle level teachers. Such a program should provide a thorough study of the nature and needs of early adolescents, middle level philosophy, curriculum, and instruction. In addition, the program should provide content preparation in at least one broad teaching field as well as field experiences at the middle level.

Basic Program (1)

(1.1) *An identifiable program is established for prospective middle level teachers.*

An effective middle level teacher preparation program should provide the following: (1) An in-depth study of the developmental stage of early adolescence; (2) Knowledge of middle level philosophy, curriculum, and instruction; (3) Content knowledge in at least one broad teaching field; and (4) Field experience at the middle level. Faculty with primary responsibilities in the program should be knowledgeable about middle level philosophy, curriculum, instruction, and early adolescent development. They should also have middle level teaching experience.

Information which describes the qualifications, middle level teaching experience and special middle level expertise of faculty with primary assignment in the middle level program should be provided in response to checklist item number 7 of the cover page to the matrix.

An identifiable program may be a middle level major, concentration or specific set of courses and other experiences as long as the essential components are present and documented. Having such an identifiable program should be documented by citing a description of the program from the institution's catalog. Other materials which can help the reviewers establish an understanding of the nature of the program should also be included. (Record under 1.1 of the matrix).

Nature and Needs of Early Adolescents (2)

The program prepares professionals who:

(2.1) *Understand the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral development of early adolescents in various social contexts.*

(2.2) *Plan the teaching/learning process to facilitate early adolescent development.*

(2.3) *Create and maintain a developmentally responsive program and learning environment.*

A primary goal of middle level teacher education programs is the preparation of teachers who facilitate early adolescent growth and development. These programs should be designed to develop a thorough knowledge of early adolescence as a distinct

developmental stage between childhood and adolescence.

Documentation for the guidelines for this section might include one or a combination of the following: (1) Course descriptions and syllabi of courses which focus on early adolescence; (2) Methods course(s) in middle level education which incorporate a specific formal study of early adolescence; and, (3) Field experiences which are integrated into a formal study of early adolescence.

Middle Level Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction (3)

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The program prepares professionals who:

(3.1) *Articulate and apply a sound philosophy of middle level education.*

A thorough background in the foundations of middle level education enables teachers to articulate and apply the necessary components of responsive education for early adolescents. Professionals should demonstrate an understanding of the historical development, goals and philosophy, and mission of middle level education.

Documentation for this guideline might include one or a combination of the following: (1) A course in the history, philosophy and program of middle level education; (2) Methods course(s) in middle level education which include a formal study of these topics; and (3) Field experiences which incorporate a formal study of these topics.

(3.2) *Apply an understanding of organizational structures appropriate for middle level learners (such as: interdisciplinary teaming, block-time, cross graded grouping).*

(3.3) *Understand and implement a balanced and integrated middle level curriculum which includes:*

(3.3.1) Skills for continued learning.
(3.3.2) Organized knowledge.
(3.3.3) Exploratory and enrichment opportunities.
(3.3.4) Teacher-based guidance.

(3.4) *Understand interrelationships among fields of knowledge.*

(3.5) *Adapt curriculum and instruction to the learning patterns of each student.*

(3.6) *Facilitate student's personal growth through: appropriate instructional procedures, relevant curriculum content, and supportive personal relationships.*

(3.7) *Foster active learning by employing a variety of classroom grouping patterns*

including small group work and independent study.

(3.8) *Teach problem solving and communication skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) as an integral part of all instruction.*

(3.9) *Perform guidance roles in formal and informal settings.*

(3.10) *Provide leadership for student activities.*

(3.11) *Employ evaluation procedures appropriate for early adolescents.*

(3.12) *Work collaboratively with teachers, staff members, parents, resource persons, and community groups.*

Middle level curriculum is based on creating an educational environment which is responsive to the developmental needs of early adolescents. Both the climate for learning and content are important in the middle level school. Curriculum emphasizes both product and process. It seeks to increase the fund of knowledge students possess and promotes continued development of basic skills needed to acquire that knowledge.

Prospective teachers should have an understanding of the overall structure of middle level curriculum and the basic premises underlying it. Middle level teacher preparation programs should prepare prospective teachers who apply an understanding of developmentally responsive organizational structures. They should demonstrate their ability to understand and implement integrated middle level curriculum as noted in guidelines 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6.

Prospective teachers should demonstrate an understanding that: (a) Skills for continued learning should be a part of all courses taught at the middle level; (b) Organized knowledge should provide middle level students with a foundation of content areas without specializing them in just one area of a broad field, for example social studies, not just history; (c) Exploratory and enrichment opportunities within curriculum offerings should be provided for all students so they can expand their knowledge in a variety of areas in traditional academic fields, fine and practical arts, foreign language/culture and other exploratory opportunities; and (d) A knowledge of teacher-based guidance programs and their essential role in effective middle level programs should also be demonstrated.

Prospective middle level teachers should understand the relationships among fields of knowledge (i.e., interdisciplinary team teaching, correlation, fusion, core-curriculum). They should also know how to adapt curriculum to the learning patterns of students and to facilitate their personal growth through relevant curriculum content and supportive personal relationships.

The ultimate test of middle level education takes place in the classroom.

Prospective middle level teachers should clearly demonstrate their command of a variety of instructional strategies. The wide diversity of development among middle level students evokes a need for instructional variety. The program should prepare teachers who adapt instruction to the learning patterns of students. This diversity of instruction should foster active learning by employing a variety of classroom grouping patterns including small group work and independent study.

Prospective middle level teachers should be highly effective at teaching problem solving and communication skills (i.e., reading, listening, writing, and speaking) as integral parts of all instruction. They should also be capable of providing formal and informal guidance to their students and serving as leaders in student activities. Prospective middle level teachers should clearly demonstrate their abilities to facilitate students' personal growth through appropriate instructional procedures and supportive personal relationships. They should know how to work collaboratively with teachers, staff members, parents, resource persons, and community groups.

Documentation for the guidelines in this section might include one or a combination of the following: (1) Courses in middle level curriculum and instruction; (2) Methods course(s) in middle level education which include a strong emphasis on curriculum and instruction; and (3) Field experiences which are integrated into a formal study of middle level curriculum and instruction.

Teaching Fields and Methodology (4)

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(4.1) *Teaching fields are broad, interdisciplinary and encompass the major areas within those fields. Preparation in at least one field is required but two different fields is preferred.*

(4.2) *When preparation in two fields is provided, those fields should be different (science and mathematics, not biology and chemistry).*

(4.3) *At least one methods course designed specifically for teaching at the middle level should be provided.*

This broad teaching fields approach includes a variety of disciplines within a field. For example, a social studies concentration could be comprised of courses in history, geography, economics, and political science. This broad interdisciplinary approach expands perspective and makes more explicit the relationship among various disciplines.

Preparation in two fields is essential for teaching block-time programs in which one teacher teaches two or more subjects to the same group of students, and is very desirable for working within interdisciplinary teams. With background in two areas, teachers can better correlate content. For example, the reading, writing, and

vocabulary skills in language arts can be reinforced while teaching social studies or science. Dually-prepared teachers may go beyond correlation to fusion in which the subject matter from two or more areas is combined or fused, as in an American studies course which might incorporate content from English, social studies, art, and music. They may also develop a core curriculum in which content is organized around problems of immediate relevance to students, for example interpersonal relations, substance abuse and world peace.

It is essential that methods courses emphasize middle level instruction. The unique characteristics and needs of early adolescents differ from those of younger children and older adolescents. Instructional methods should be adopted accordingly and at least one methods course designed specifically for teaching at the middle level should be provided. Prospective middle level teachers should receive instruction that models and focuses on exemplary practices for young people at this level. If the scope of an instructional course encompasses two levels, for example elementary and middle, documentation which clearly shows that significant differentiation occurs for both levels must be included.

Documentation for the guidelines for this section might include one or a combination of the following: (1) Methods course(s) in middle level education; (2) Methods course(s) in a particular content field which clearly include a strong emphasis on the middle level; (3) Field experiences which are integrated into a formal study of middle level methods; and, (4) Catalog descriptions which list the number of hours and available courses for content field(s).

Field Experience (5)

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Field experiences will provide:

(5.1) *Early and continuing involvement in grade 5-9.*

(5.2) *Observation, participation, and teaching experiences ranging from individual to large group settings.*

(5.3) *Full time student teaching of at least 10 weeks in grades 5-9, supervised by a qualified teacher and a university/college supervisor.*

Field experiences at the middle level should begin early in the program and continue throughout. These experiences should occur in a variety of fifth through ninth grade classrooms and should encompass observation, participation, and teaching. Involvement should range from individual to large group settings and progressively increase in responsibility. Students should have opportunities to analyze and discuss their experiences with appropriate personnel.

The student teaching experience should be full-time for at least ten weeks in any of the grades five through nine. This experience should include the teaching field(s) in which the student will be certified. Ample time and extended opportunities for planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction should be present. Student teaching should be conducted under the mentorship of a qualified, experienced teacher who effectively communicates an understanding of early adolescence to the student teacher. A full range of school activities and responsibilities that reflect the diverse roles of a middle level teacher should be included.

Documentation might include a listing of: (1) Required and elective early field experiences; (2) Field-based experiences within methods courses; and, (3) Student teaching handbooks and related materials.

Masters Program

The masters degree program should enhance the general expertise of middle level educators by ensuring a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of early adolescent learners and schooling that is responsive to students' developmental nature and needs. The program should provide further expertise in teaching field content and pedagogy.

(1) The curriculum for the masters degree shows depth and breadth in the study of the theoretical base and exemplary practice of middle level education. The plan of study for each student builds upon prior professional preparation and experience.

There must be an identifiable program leading to advanced studies in middle level education which includes the program components listed below. An identifiable program may be a middle level masters degree or other masters degree with primary emphasis on middle level education.

Documentation should include citation of the program description in the institution's catalog. Examples of student advisement documents and other appropriate materials should also be included.

(2) Programs leading to the masters degree in middle level education include the following components:

(2.1) *Major theories and research findings concerning early adolescent development: physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral.*

Experienced middle level educators are very much aware of the ways in which early adolescents behave. However, they may not have an adequate understanding of the basis of this behavior. Knowledge of early adolescent development aids in the interpretation of these behaviors. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of research concerning the developmental characteristics (physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral) of early adolescents. This research can assist professionals in the complex and sometimes difficult task of successfully educating this age group. Therefore, it is important that all educators of young adolescents have an understanding of the major theories and research findings concerning early adolescent development.

Documentation might include: (1) Course descriptions and syllabi of courses indicating the study of early adolescent growth and development; and (2) Guidelines for or samples of graduate level projects or thesis directed at the study of early adolescence.

(2.2) *The history, philosophy, and future development of middle level education.*

Middle level education has increasingly been recognized as an important and separate level in the K-12 educational organization. Knowledgeable middle level educators who are cognizant of the foundation of middle level education are needed.

Middle level professionals should fully understand middle level philosophy and possess a thorough understanding of factors that influence the future direction of middle level education. Therefore, educators working toward advanced degrees should study the history, philosophy, and future development of middle level education.

Documentation might include: (1) Course descriptions and syllabi of courses indicating a major focus on the history, philosophy, and current/future trends/issues in middle level education; and (2) Guidelines for or samples of, thesis or graduate level projects focusing on the history, philosophy, and current trends and issues in middle level education.

(2.3) *Curriculum theories and research focusing on middle level education.*

Curriculum designed to be developmentally responsive to the needs and characteristics of early adolescents provides the cornerstone for effective middle level education. As middle level education assumes its rightful place with elementary and secondary education, it must be viewed as more than an extension of the elementary school or a miniaturized version of the high school. There are distinct features of middle level curriculum which must be understood in order to create educational environments designed specifically for early adolescents. To be successful at these and related tasks, middle level educators should have a thorough understanding of curriculum theories and research focusing on the middle level.

Documentation might include: (1) Course descriptions and syllabi of courses which focus primarily on middle level curriculum theory, curriculum design, and research; and (2) Guidelines for or samples of thesis or graduate level projects directed at middle level curriculum theory, curriculum design, and research.

(2.4) *Pedagogy appropriate for early adolescent learners.*

Educators pursuing advanced degrees need to understand and implement appropriate instructional strategies as well as facilitate other professionals' use of these strategies. The link between developmental characteristics and appropriate methodology should be clear. Consideration of active involvement of students, varied instructional strategies, and student's personal growth should be incorporated in instructional decision making. Thus, middle level educators should develop further expertise in pedagogy appropriate for early adolescent learners.

Documentation might include: (1) Course descriptions and syllabi of courses which focus on the study of pedagogy appropriate for early adolescent learners; (2) Guidelines for or evaluations of practicum and field experiences; and (3) Guidelines for or samples of graduate level projects focusing on appropriate pedagogy.

(2.5) *Advanced study in one or more teaching fields.*

Establishing a sound foundation in the various content fields is critical at the middle level. An intent of middle level curriculum is to give students opportunities

to explore various fields of study and to understand the relationship between these fields.

Middle level educators have a responsibility to keep themselves current in their teaching field(s). However, due to the interdisciplinary focus at the middle level, educators may choose to increase their knowledge in content areas outside their primary discipline(s). Professional development in the primary teaching field(s) or new teaching field should include study of trends and issues and/or content knowledge.

Documentation might include: (1) Descriptions of courses providing advanced content preparation in a particular teaching field(s); (2) Courses focusing on effective methodology used in a particular teaching field; and (3) Practicum and field experiences which are integrated into a formal study of advanced content preparation.

(2.6) *A culminating examination, project, or thesis that links theory and practice.*

Graduate students in middle level masters programs should demonstrate an ability to integrate theory and practice. As reflective practitioners, it is important they fully comprehend the overall knowledge base of their advanced program. This integration can be achieved through a set of experiences which are related and have a common focus and direction.

Documentation might include: (1) Guidelines for or samples of practicum experiences or culminating projects which demonstrate the practical application of theories and concepts; and (2) Guidelines for or samples of written and/or comprehensive examinations which assess practitioners in their ability to integrate middle level theory and practice.

Specialist Program

A specialist degree program extends knowledge of early adolescent development and responsive schooling, emphasizing specialized preparation for leadership in school-based program development. To these ends the program evidences links among theory, research findings, exemplary school practices and leadership.

(1) The curriculum for the specialist degree shows depth and breadth in the study of the theoretical base and exemplary practice of middle level education. The plan of study for each student builds upon prior professional preparation and experience.

There must be an identifiable program leading to advanced studies in middle level education which includes the program components listed below. An identifiable program may be a middle level specialist degree or other specialist degree with primary emphasis on middle level education.

Documentation should include citation of the program description in the institution's catalog. Examples of student advisement documents and other appropriate materials should also be included.

(2) There are specific assessment policies and procedures to ensure that applicants have adequate backgrounds and experiences in middle level education.

The nature of the specialist degree program requires that participants be experienced middle level educators. To build upon acquired middle level experience there should be specific assessment policies and procedures in place to ensure that applicants have adequate backgrounds and experiences in middle level education.

Documentation should include: (1) Description of admission requirements and procedures, for example teaching experience, certification, entrance tests; (2) Student advisement documents; and (3) Other relevant materials.

(3) Programs leading to the specialist degree in middle level education include the following components:

(3.1) *Major theories and research findings concerning early adolescent development: physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral.*

Experienced middle level educators are very much aware of the ways in which early adolescents behave. However, they may not have an adequate understanding of the basis of this behavior. Knowledge of early adolescent development aids in the interpretation of these behaviors. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of research concerning the developmental characteristics (physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral) of early adolescents. This research can assist professionals in the complex and sometimes difficult task of successfully educating this age group. Therefore, it is important that all educators of young adolescents have an understanding of the major theories and research findings concerning early adolescent development.

Documentation might include: (1) Course descriptions and syllabi of courses indicating the study of early adolescent growth and development; and (2) Guidelines for or samples of graduate level projects or thesis directed at the study of early adolescence.

(3.2) *The history, philosophy, and future development of middle level education.*

Middle level education has increasingly been recognized as an important and separate level in the K-12 educational organization. Knowledgeable middle level educators who are cognizant of the foundation of middle level education are needed. Middle level professionals should fully understand middle level philosophy and possess a thorough understanding of factors that influence the future direction of middle level education. Therefore, educators working toward advanced degrees should study the history, philosophy, and future development of middle level education.

Documentation might include: (1) Course descriptions and syllabi of courses indicating a major focus on the history, philosophy, and current/future trends/issues in middle level education; and (2) Guidelines for or samples of, thesis or graduate level projects focusing on the history, philosophy, and current trends and issues in middle level education.

(3.3) *Curriculum theories and research focusing on middle level education.*

Curriculum designed to be developmentally responsive to the needs and characteristics of early adolescents provides the cornerstone for effective middle level education. As middle level education assumes its rightful place with elementary and secondary education, it must be viewed as more than an extension of the elementary school or a miniaturized version of the high school. There are distinct features of middle level curriculum which must be understood in order to create educational environments designed specifically for early adolescents. To be successful at these and related tasks, middle level educators should have a thorough understanding of curriculum theories and research focusing on the middle level.

Documentation might include: (1) Course descriptions and syllabi of courses which focus primarily on middle level curriculum theory, curriculum design, and research; and (2) Guidelines for or samples of thesis or graduate level projects directed at middle level curriculum theory, curriculum design, and research.

(3.4) *Pedagogy appropriate for early adolescent learners.*

Educators pursuing advanced degrees need to understand and implement appropriate instructional strategies as well as facilitate other professionals' use of these strategies. The link between developmental characteristics and appropriate methodology should be clear. Consideration of active involvement of students, varied instructional strategies, and student's personal growth should be incorporated in instructional decision making. Thus, middle level educators should develop

further expertise in pedagogy appropriate for early adolescent learners.

Documentation might include: (1) Course descriptions and syllabi of courses which focus on the study of pedagogy appropriate for early adolescent learners; (2) Guidelines for or evaluations of practicum and field experiences; and (3) Guidelines for or samples of graduate level projects focusing on appropriate pedagogy.

(3.5) *Advanced study in one or more teaching fields.*

Establishing a sound foundation in the various content fields is critical at the middle level. An intent of middle level curriculum is to give students opportunities to explore various fields of study and to understand the relationship between these fields.

Middle level educators have a responsibility to keep themselves current in their teaching field(s). However, due to the interdisciplinary focus at the middle level, educators may choose to increase their knowledge in content areas outside their primary discipline(s). Professional development in the primary teaching field(s) or new teaching field should include study of trends and issues and/or content knowledge.

Documentation might include: (1) Descriptions of courses providing advanced content preparation in a particular teaching field(s); (2) Courses focusing on effective methodology used in a particular teaching field; and (3) Practicum and field experiences which are integrated into a formal study of advanced content preparation.

(3.6) *Study of educational leadership roles.*

One of the distinguishing characteristics of specialist degree programs is preparation of experienced middle level educators for leadership roles in schools. Leadership is a key element in fostering and extending middle level principles. It is imperative that specialists in middle level education know and understand various ways leadership can be manifested. Thus, the program should include the study of educational leadership roles such as organizational development, curriculum evaluation, supervision, and research.

Documentation might include: (1) Course syllabi indicating a study of educational leadership roles; (2) Guidelines for or samples of graduate level projects or theses; and (3) Practicum and field experiences which focus upon leadership roles in middle level education.

(3.7) *A culminating project which demonstrates the candidate's leadership by applying middle level principles in the field.*

In addition to the study of leadership roles in middle level education, the specialist program should also provide candidates the opportunity to apply leadership to middle level education. The specialist program should include a culminating project which demonstrates the candidate's leadership by applying middle level

principles in the field.

Documentation should include guidelines for or samples of field experiences (internships, practicum) as well as other related descriptive materials.

Doctoral Program

A doctorate in middle level education emphasizes reflection, analysis, and synthesis. Teaching, research, scholarly writing, and service to the field are goals of the program. A comprehensive theory and research-based knowledge of middle level education is assured.

(1) The curriculum for the doctoral degree shows depth and breadth in the study of the theoretical base and exemplary practice of middle level education. The plan of study for each student builds upon prior professional preparation and experience.

(2) There are specific assessment policies and procedures to ensure that applicants have adequate backgrounds and experiences in middle level education.

There must be an identifiable program of advanced studies in middle level education which includes the program components listed below. An identifiable program may be a middle level doctoral degree or other doctoral degree which includes a major focus on middle level education. The degree name does not have to include the words "Middle Level," for example the candidate might earn a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction with a special emphasis/field in Middle Level Education.

The nature of the doctoral degree program requires that participants be experienced middle level educators. Therefore, specific assessment policies and procedures must be in place.

Documentation should include: (1) Materials such as course syllabi and catalog descriptions; (2) Description of admission requirements, for example teaching experience, certification, entrance tests; (3) Student advisement documents; and (4) Other relevant materials.

(3) Programs leading to the doctorate include the following components:

(3.1) *An indepth understanding and synthesis of:*

(3.1.1) Major theories and research findings concerning early adolescent development: physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral.

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of research focusing on the developmental characteristics and needs of early adolescents. Additional research and literature in this area is needed to more fully understand the complex relationship between the data base on early adolescence and the impact of this knowledge upon the educational environments for early adolescents. There is an important need for middle level professionals who are prepared to conduct research and provide leadership in linking research results with practice.

Documentation might include: (1) Course syllabi indicating the advanced study of early adolescent growth and development; and (2) Guidelines for, or

samples of, graduate level projects directed at the study of early adolescence.

(3.1.2) The history, philosophy, and future development of middle level education.

Middle level education is increasingly recognized as an important separate level in the K-12 educational organization. Leadership must be provided to help guide school systems as they implement effective middle level concepts and practices. Furthermore, teacher educators and faculty development personnel should become experts on early adolescence and middle level schooling.

Middle level professionals should fully understand middle level philosophy and should possess a thorough understanding of factors that influence the future directions of middle level education. Therefore, professional educators working toward advanced degrees should attain an indepth understanding and synthesis of the history, philosophy, and future development of middle level education.

Documentation might include: (1) Course syllabi with major focus on the history, philosophy, and current/future trends and issues in middle level education; and (2) Guidelines for, or samples of, graduate level projects focusing on the history, philosophy and current trends and issues in middle level education.

(3.1.3) Curriculum theories and research focusing on the middle level.

Curriculum designed specifically to be developmentally responsive to the needs and characteristics of early adolescents provides the cornerstone for effective middle level education. As middle level education assumes its rightful place with elementary and secondary education, it must be viewed as more than an extension of the elementary school or a miniaturized version of the senior high school. There are distinct features of middle level curriculum which must be understood to create educational environments specifically designed for early adolescents.

Documentation might include: (1) Course syllabi with primary focus on middle level curriculum theory, curriculum design, and research; and (2) Guidelines for, or samples of, field-based research and curriculum design.

(3.1.4) Pedagogy appropriate for early adolescent learners.

Middle level educators pursuing advanced degrees need to understand and be capable of implementing research-based instructional strategies. At the doctoral level, facilitation of other professionals' use of these strategies is an expectation. Doctoral graduates should be able to help others enhance their knowledge and skills in middle level instructional methods. The link between developmental characteristics and methodology should be clearly understood. Consideration of active involvement of students, varied instructional strategies, and students' personal growth should be incorporated in instructional decision

making. Thus, doctoral level candidates should develop further expertise in applying their knowledge and helping others implement pedagogy appropriate for early adolescent learners.

Documentation might include: (1) Course syllabi which focus on the study of pedagogy appropriate for early adolescent learners; (2) Guidelines for or evaluations of practicum and field experiences; and (3) Guidelines for, or samples of, graduate level projects.

(3.1.5) Adult development and learning.

Middle level educators who attain a doctoral degree will often assume leadership positions which require working with adults (e.g., staff development and university teaching). Therefore, middle level educators working toward the doctorate should demonstrate an understanding of adult development and learning.

Documentation might include: (1) Course syllabi which focus on adult development and learning; and (2) Guidelines for, or samples of, practicum or graduate level projects.

(3.2) *Advanced study in one or more areas of specialization.*

An intent of middle level curriculum is to give students opportunities to explore various fields of study and to understand the relationship between these fields. Middle level educators have a responsibility to keep themselves current in their teaching field(s). However, due to the interdisciplinary focus at the middle level, they may choose to increase their knowledge in a content area outside their primary teaching field. Advanced study in one or more specialization areas includes, but is not limited to content areas. For example, a specialization at the doctoral level might be in educational leadership or social science.

Documentation might include: (1) Descriptions of courses providing advanced content preparation in an area of specialization; and (2) Courses focusing on effective methodology used in an area of specialization.

(3.3) *Professional preparation for leadership roles in middle level education.*

Leadership is critical for future curriculum development and instructional development in middle level schools. As experts on middle level education, graduates of doctoral programs will be expected to function as leaders. Since leadership is a key element in fostering and extending middle level principles, it is imperative that graduates of doctoral level programs focusing on middle level education be able to understand and demonstrate various leadership styles. Thus, the doctoral program should include the study of leadership roles.

Documentation might include: (1) Course syllabi indicating studies of leadership roles; (2) Guidelines for, or samples of, graduate level projects or practicums; and (3) Other relevant materials.

(3.4) *Research methodologies applied to middle level education.*

An important component of doctoral programs is the provision of opportunities to interpret and conduct research on critical issues affecting middle level education. Study of research methodologies including research methods and findings, translation of research findings to practice, development of research skills, and development and implementation of applied research is integral to a doctoral program. Therefore, middle level doctoral programs should incorporate research methodologies applied to middle level education.

Documentation might include: (1) Course syllabi focusing on research methodologies applied to middle level education; and (2) Guidelines for, or samples of, graduate level projects.

(3.5) *Dissertation or equivalent scholarly work which involves basic or applied research and study pertinent to middle level education.*

One of the features of a doctoral program which distinguishes it from a masters or specialist program is the expectation that the doctoral candidate is preparing to become an active contributor to the field of middle level education. Experts in middle level education should demonstrate an ability to integrate theory and practice. As reflective practitioners, it is important that they fully comprehend the overall knowledge base of their advanced programs. This integration can be achieved through a dissertation or equivalent scholarly work which involves basic or applied research and study pertinent to middle level education.

Documentation might include procedures for conducting a doctoral dissertation or equivalent scholarly work, for example, proposal, research committee structure and dissertation defense.

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Curriculum Guidelines

Matrices

Introduction

These guidelines were prepared by the Standing Committee on Professional Preparation and Certification of National Middle School Association. They provide minimum standards for the pre- and in-service preparation of professional educators for the middle level (generally grades 5 through 9).

Underlying these guidelines is the recognition that the roles and responsibilities of middle level educators are unique, and that they demand and deserve specifically designed preparation programs. These programs should provide educators with the specialized knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes that will help them achieve high levels of success in working with early adolescents. Such a program should provide a thorough study of the nature and needs of early adolescents, middle level philosophy, curriculum and instruction. In addition, the program should provide content preparation in at least one broad teaching field as well as field experiences at the middle level. The ultimate outcome will be educators who are dedicated and committed to early adolescents and their instruction. Institutions are encouraged to expand these basic components as they develop new programs and refine existing ones.

Who should respond to these guidelines?

You must respond to these guidelines if the institution offers basic and/or advanced programs that prepare middle level or middle school teachers. If your middle level program is for the preparation of social studies, science, and/or mathematics teachers, you must complete the middle school guidelines of NMSA as well as the appropriate sections of the NCSS, NSTA, and/or NCTM guidelines.

Cover Sheet

Basic and Advanced Programs in Middle Level Education

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Basic and Advanced Programs

Submitted by: _____

_____

_____

_____

Date: _____

Chief Compiler: _____

Phone: _____

Check levels offered:

____ Bachelor's
____ Basic Post-baccalaureate
____ Masters
____ Specialist/Sixth year
____ Doctorate

Checklist of materials to be enclosed with this folio:

_____ Overview and scope, including the following:

_____ (1) Description of where the program is located within the professional education unit and its interrelationships with other programs in the unit and the university/college.

_____ (2) Objectives of the program.

_____ (3) Students' courses of studies with required courses clearly marked.

_____ (4) Descriptions of field experiences, student teaching, and internship. Include the amount of time and the type of supervision.

_____ (5) Explanation of how the program may deviate from the guidelines.

_____ (6) Number of graduates from the program(s) at different levels over the past three years.

_____ (7) List of faculty with primary assignments in the middle level education program. Provide responsibilities and tenure status. Also describe the experiences of faculty in middle school settings. (**Do not send vitae.**)

_____ Matrix/Matrices

_____ Course Descriptions and/or Syllabi for all courses listed on the matrix.

Instructions for Preparation of the Folio

Use the following matrices to report evidence of compliance with the NMSA guidelines for preparation of middle level educators. List on the matrix the specific experiences and course or courses in which the guideline is addressed. Describe related experiences and course components, especially when the supporting documents (e.g., syllabi) are not clear about the guideline content.

If the space provided is not sufficient, attach supplementary pages. You may choose to copy the matrices on the computer so that sufficient space to respond is available. Each folio must include the items listed on the cover sheet that precedes this page.

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Guidelines	Cite courses and/or experiences that fulfill the guideline. Provide descriptions and examples as needed.
3.3 Understand and implement a balanced and integrated middle level curriculum which includes:	
3.3.1 Skills for continued learning.	
3.3.2 Organized knowledge.	
3.3.3 Exploratory and enrichment opportunities	
3.3.4 Teacher-based guidance	
3.4 Understand interrelationships among fields of knowledge	
3.5 Adapt curriculum and instruction to the learning patterns of each student.	
3.6 Facilitate student's personal growth through: appropriate instructional procedures, relevant curriculum content and supportive personal relationships.	
3.7 Foster active learning by employing a variety of classroom grouping patterns including small group work and independent study.	
3.8 Teach problem solving and communication skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) as an integral part of all instruction.	
3.9 Perform guidance roles in formal and informal settings.	
3.10 Provide leadership for student activities.	

Basic Preparation for Middle Level Teachers

An identifiable teacher education program should be established for the preparation of middle level teachers. Such a program should provide a thorough study of the nature and needs of early adolescents, middle level philosophy, curriculum, and instruction. In addition, the program should provide content preparation in at least one broad teaching field as well as field experiences at the middle level.

Guidelines	Cite courses and/or experiences that fulfill the guideline. Provide descriptions and examples as needed.
1 Basic Program	
1.1 An identifiable program is established for prospective middle level teachers.	
2 Nature and Needs of Early Adolescents *The program prepares professionals who:*	
2.1 Understand the physical, social, emotional, intellectual and moral development of early adolescents in various social contexts.	
2.2 Plan the teaching/learning process to facilitate early adolescent development.	
2.3 Create and maintain a developmentally responsive program and learning environment.	
3 Middle Level Philosophy, Curriculum, and Instruction *The program prepares professionals who:*	
3.1 Articulate and apply a sound philosophy of middle level education.	
3.2 Apply an understanding of organizational structures appropriate for middle level learners (such as: interdisciplinary teaming, block-time, cross graded groupings.	

Guidelines	Cite courses and/or experiences that fulfill the guideline. Provide descriptions and examples as needed.
3.11 Employ evaluation procedures appropriate for early adolescents.	
3.12 Work collaboratively with teachers, staff members, parents, resource persons and community groups.	
4 Teaching Fields and Methodology	
4.1 Teaching fields are broad, interdisciplinary and encompass the major areas within those fields. At least one field is required but preparation in two different areas is preferred.	
4.2 When preparation in two fields is provided, those fields should be different (science and mathematics, not biology and chemistry).	
4.3 At least one methods course designed specifically for teaching at the middle level should be provided.	
5 Field Experiences. *Field experiences will provide:*	
5.1 Early and continuing involvement in grades 5-9.	
5.2 Observation, participation, and teaching experiences ranging from individual to large group settings	
5.3 Full-time student teaching of at least 10 weeks in grades 5-9, supervised by a qualified teacher and a university/ college supervisor.	

Masters Programs in Middle Level Education

The masters degree program should enhance the general expertise of middle level educators by ensuring a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of early adolescent learners and schooling that is responsive to students' developmental nature and needs. The program should provide further expertise in teaching field content and pedagogy.

Guidelines	Cite courses and/or experiences that fulfill the guideline. Provide descriptions and examples as needed.
1. The curriculum for the masters degree shows depth and breadth in the study of the theoretical base and exemplary practice of middle level education. The plan of study for each student builds upon prior professional preparation and experience.	
2. Programs leading to the masters degree in middle level education include the following components:	
2.1 Major theories and research findings concerning early adolescent development: physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral.	
2.2 The history, philosophy, and future development of middle school education.	
2.3 Curriculum theories and research focusing on middle level education.	
2.4 Pedagogy appropriate for early adolescent learners.	
2.5 Advanced study in one or more teaching fields.	
2.6 A culminating examination, project or thesis that links theory and practice.	

Specialist Programs in Middle Level Education

A specialist degree program extends knowledge of early adolescent development and responsive schooling, emphasizing specialized preparation for leadership in school-based program development. To these ends, the program evidences links among theory, research findings, exemplary school practices, and leadership.

Guidelines	Cite courses and/or experiences that fulfill the guideline. Provide descriptions and examples as needed.
1. The curriculum for the specialists degree shows depth and breadth in the study of the theoretical base and exemplary practice of middle level education. The plan of study for each student builds upon prior professional preparation and experience.	
2. There are specific assessment policies and procedures to ensure that applicants have adequate backgrounds and experiences in middle level education.	
3. Programs leading to the specialists in middle level education include the following components:	
3.1 Major theories and research findings concerning early adolescent development: Physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral.	
3.2 The history, philosophy, and future development of middle level education.	
3.3 Curriculum theories and research focusing on the middle level.	
3.4 Pedagogy appropriate for early adolescent learners.	
3.5 Advanced study in one or more broad teaching fields.	
3.6 Study of educational leadership roles.	

Guidelines	Cite courses and/or experiences that fulfill the guideline. Provide descriptions and examples as needed.
3.7 A culminating project which demonstrates the candidate's leadership by applying middle level principles in the field.	

Doctoral Programs in Middle Level Education

A doctorate in middle level education emphasizes reflection, analysis, and synthesis. Teaching, research, scholarly writing, and service to the field are goals of the program. A comprehensive theory and research-based knowledge of middle level education is assured.

Guidelines	Cite courses and/or experiences that fulfill the guideline. Provide descriptions and examples as needed.
1. The curriculum for the doctoral degree shows depth and breadth in the study of the theoretical base and exemplary practice of middle level education. The plan of study for each student builds upon prior professional preparation and experience.	
2. There are specific assessment policies and procedures to ensure that applicants have adequate backgrounds and experiences in middle level education.	
3. Programs leading to the doctorate in middle level education include the following components:	
3.1 An indepth understanding and synthesis of:	
3.1.1 Major theories and research findings concerning early adolescent development: physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral.	
3.1.2 The history, philosophy, and future development of middle level education.	
3.1.3 Curriculum theories and research focusing on the middle level.	
3.1.4 Pedagogy appropriate for early adolescent learners.	
3.1.5 Adult development and learning.	

Guidelines	Cite courses and/or experiences that fulfill the guideline. Provide descriptions and examples as needed.
3.2 Advanced study in one or more areas of specialization.	
3.3 Professional preparation for leadership roles in middle level education.	
3.4 Research methodologies applied to middle level education.	
3.5 Dissertation or equivalent scholarly work which involves basic or applied research and study pertinent to middle level education.	

Notes

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